



Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

INSIDE

Opening Night of Democratic Convention Celebrates Obama's Story

By Michelle Austein
Staff Writer

Denver -- Thousands of Democratic leaders and delegates began the Democratic National Convention with a celebration for their party and Senator Barack Obama, the man they will nominate later this week as the first African-American presidential candidate of a major political party.

"During our national convention, we will demon-

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The Democrats opened their four-day convention on August 15 with thousands of delegates, party elders and lobbyists flooding the halls of the Pepsi Center in downtown Denver.

U.S. Foreign Aid Agency Joins with MTV to Fight Human Trafficking

By Jane Morse
Staff Writer

Washington -- In a move at odds with bureaucracy's reputation for stodginess, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is partnering with MTV (Music Television) on a campaign to warn young people about the dangers of human trafficking.



Lucy Liu is among many celebrities working to fight trafficking.

The MTV EXIT ("End Exploitation and Trafficking") campaign has produced a pair of documentaries narrated by celebrities to raise awareness about this modern-day form of slavery. Internet users also can log on to an engrossing, informative Web site available in 27 languages.

USAID and the MTV Europe Foundation

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strate to all Americans why we need Barack Obama and Joe Biden in the White House," Howard Dean, chairman of the Democratic National Committee said as he called the convention to order the afternoon of August 25.

The evening's activities were designed to rally the party and featured uplifting speeches from leaders and delegates. Dispersed between these speeches and musical performances were videos about Obama and about issues important to Democrats.

Those who know Obama well -- including his half-sister Maya Soetoro-Ng and his wife, Michelle -- addressed the convention.

Soetoro-Ng discussed shared stories about their mother, from whom she and her older half-brother learned "that our deepest humanity and happiness would be found by reaching out to, empathizing with and working to serve others."

As delegates waved signs bearing her name, Michelle Obama told the crowd about her upbringing and the values she and her husband share.

"I believe that each of us, no matter what our age or background or walk of life, each of us has something to contribute to the life of this nation. It's a belief Barack shares, a belief at the heart of his life's work," Michelle Obama said.

"That's why he's running -- to end the war in Iraq responsibly, to build an economy that lifts every family, to make health care available for every American and to make sure every child in this nation gets a



Michelle Obama waves at end of her speech at the 2008 Democratic National Convention in Denver, August 25, 2008. REUTERS/Larry Downing

world-class education all the way from preschool to college. That's what Barack Obama will do as president of the United States of America."

One of the most emotional parts of the night for the crowd was an unexpected appearance by Massachusetts Senator Edward (Ted) Kennedy. Kennedy, the second-longest serving member of the U.S. Senate and brother of the late president John F. Kennedy recently was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor and has been out of the public eye while undergoing treatment. His long Senate career and role as patriarch in the well-known Kennedy family has made him a major figure in American politics.

Kennedy praised Obama, saying the presumed Democratic nominee will fight for equality, break governmental gridlock in Washington and improve health care. Echoing words his brother John used in his 1961

inauguration speech, Kennedy said "this November the torch will be passed again to a new generation of Americans."

Obama briefly addressed the crowd via satellite from Kansas City, Missouri, where he watched his wife's speech in a local family's living room. The Illinois senator will address the convention formally when he accepts his party's nomination on August 28 at a Denver stadium before a crowd expected to number more than 75,000.

CONVENTION ACTIVITY SCATTERED THROUGHOUT DENVER

The Pepsi Center, home to the city's professional basketball and hockey teams, serves as the convention hall, but political business is occurring all over the city. Issue advocacy groups have rented space throughout Denver to hold events. Celebrities like Kanye West, Ben

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(MTVEF) also are working with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to show the documentaries in rural areas where people might not otherwise see the films.

"The campaign is meant to save lives," says Oliver Carduner, director of USAID's Regional Development Mission for Asia. "Through MTV, it is reaching millions of young people, the group most at risk in Asia."

According to U.S. estimates, nearly 800,000 people are trafficked each year across national borders -- and this number does not include the additional millions worldwide who are forced or tricked into labor and sex exploitation within their own countries.

In the South Asia and Asia Pacific region, where trafficking is especially prevalent, the MTV EXIT campaign is expected to reach more than 300 million households.

"STAR POWER" HIGHLIGHTS THE MESSAGE

Two different documentaries have been produced, each tailored to address specific cultural sensitivities in Asia. *Sold* is made for the Indian subcontinent and surrounding countries. *Traffic* is distributed through the rest of the Asia-Pacific region. Both films are narrated by top Asian celebrities.

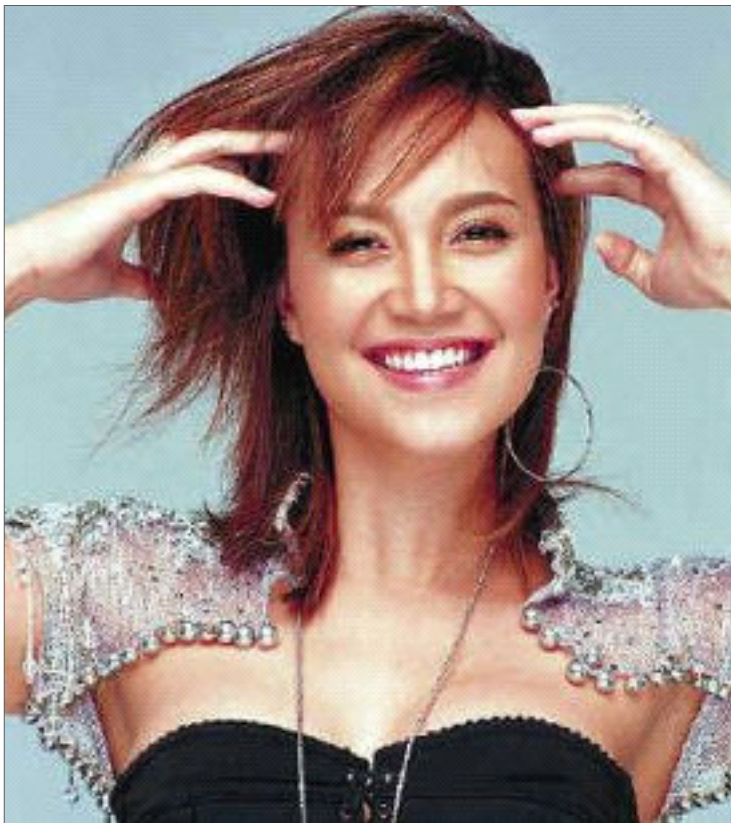
Lucy Liu, known for her roles in the movie *Charlie's Angels* and the American television series *Ally McBeal*, hosts the English-language version. Stars who narrate the releases in other languages include actress and former Miss Universe

Traffic introduces viewers to Anna, a Filipina who was trafficked into prostitution; Eka, an Indonesian whose dream job as a housekeeper in Singapore turned into a nightmare of forced domestic servitude; and Min Aung and his wife, who left Burma for what they thought

would be well-paying jobs in Thailand, only to be imprisoned for two years as slave laborers in a factory.

The films also look beyond the immediate victims of trafficking, a cruel business, which, according to U.N. estimates, generates some \$10 billion each year.

In *Traffic*, a Filipino trafficker boasts how easily his agents' lies can lure gullible victims; a young man tells how he gives a little extra money to sex workers if he thinks they have been trafficked, never questioning his own role in the trafficking chain; and a police officer and the operator of a shelter for abused women talk about the challenges of their work.



Thai pop-music sensation Tata Young joined a MTV-USAID campaign to stop human slavery.

Lara Dutta of India; and singers Rain of South Korea, Tata Young of Thailand and Christian Bautista of the Philippines.

NO PREACHING

There is little preaching in these films -- just cold, hard looks at different aspects of human trafficking. *Traffic* and *Sold* tell the stories of real people who were trafficked.

Earlier in 2008, Radiohead, a popular music group, joined MTV EXIT and USAID with the release of its music video for the single "All I Need," a stark look at child labor. A split screen juxtaposes a day in the life of an affluent Western boy with a young Asian forced to make shoes in a sweatshop. There is no commentary in this *Parallel Lives* video; just the camera following their daily activities.

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Affleck and George Clooney will attend political events during the day and parties at area bars and restaurants at night.

Political caucuses, including the black caucus, the Hispanic caucus and the rural caucus met August 25 at the Colorado Convention Center, a short distance from the Pepsi Center. The center will host political activities all week long, and the streets surrounding it have become a gathering area for political activists, protesters and curious onlookers. Streets were packed with vendors selling Obama T-shirts, posters and other souvenirs and companies giving away pamphlets, stickers, pins, DVDs and snack bars.

But Democrats did not have Denver all to themselves, as shown by a small group waving John McCain signs outside the convention center. Well-known Republican leaders, including former presidential candidates Rudy Giuliani and Mitt Romney, are in town to highlight their party's political positions.

More than 15,000 journalists from about 130 countries are in Denver as well. Most have set up temporary offices in tents in the Pepsi Center's parking lot where they can watch official convention proceedings through a live television feed. Campaign surrogates circulate through the tents, promoting the Obama-Biden ticket and answering questions on the party's position on issues such as the economy and the war in Iraq.

The convention provides not only an opportunity for the party to highlight their positions on these issues, but a chance for the American people to get to know Obama better. Once people get a chance to hear directly from Obama, Colorado State Senator Peter Groff told journalists at the State Department's Foreign Press Center, and "once they hear that frankness, once they hear that directness, I think we'll see a separation in the polls."

Polls currently show a very close race between Obama and McCain.

For more information on the Democratic National Convention, see "Campaign Trail Talk (<http://blogs.america.gov/campaign/>)." ♦

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A SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

This innovative public-private partnership was initiated by USAID's Regional Development Mission for Asia (RMDA), which was established in Bangkok in 2003. It supports programs to use natural resources responsibly, provide access to clean water, encourage trade and economic development, fight infectious diseases and assist vulnerable people.

MTV, launched in the United States in 1981, now reaches millions of people around the world via its television programs and its Web site,

MTV.com. Beginning in the 1990s, MTV started launching campaigns to raise awareness on social issues. These include "Choose or Lose," which encouraged some 20 million Americans to register to vote, and "Fight for Your Rights," which deals with issues such as crime, drugs and violence. The MTV Europe Foundation is the co-sponsor for the EXIT campaign.

USAID contributed slightly more than \$3 million to the EXIT campaign; MTV's contribution in air time is valued at about \$10 million.

USAID's Women in Development initiative and the Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (GTIP) recently provided some fiscal 2008

funding to help the documentaries and anti-trafficking information reach rural areas. USAID/RDMA is seeking additional funding for this crucial component of the campaign.

"These documentaries give NGOs the ability to reach poor communities, from where victims are trafficked, with the same reality-based message that the well-off watch in their living rooms," Carduner says. "By raising awareness on both ends of the labor-market chain, and by using celebrities to get the message across, we are creating a powerful dynamic for change."

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov/>) ♦

U.S. Treasury, Muslim Charities Intensify Dialogue on Safe Giving

By Andrzej Zwanecki
Staff Writer

Washington -- Masood Alam Khan witnessed the other side of the huge international humanitarian effort in the aftermath of the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan. Among groups actively engaged in bringing relief to the victims were terrorist organizations. They used every opportunity to solicit support for their cause and recruit new members. Khan, the chairman of Islamic Help, a United Kingdom-based charity, said it was a wake-up call for him and other charity representatives who witnessed it.

Khan was speaking at an August 15 "Charity Roundtable" at the U.S. Treasury Department that brought together U.S. officials and representatives of Arab and American-

Muslim organizations. As terrorist organizations continue to raise funds and try to gain legitimacy through charities and other means, the U.S. government and Arab and Muslim-American communities are stepping up efforts to facilitate charitable giving while preventing abuse by terrorists and their supporters.

Since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the Treasury has designated six U.S.-based Muslim charities as terrorist supporters and frozen their assets. Several such groups also have been prosecuted,

but none has been convicted on terrorism-related charges. Nevertheless, the stigma from legal actions has had a chilling effect on donors and volunteers, according to U.S. Muslim representatives. Donations

ties to undergo a tough vetting process conducted by a charity watchdog arm of the Better Business Bureau, a nongovernmental group that works to ensure the integrity of private businesses. The



Palestinians unload flour donated by a U.S. aid agency in the West Bank, where many rely on aid from abroad.

to Muslim charities in the United States have dropped significantly in the past seven years.

Muslim fundraisers say many Muslims who view charitable contribution as a religious duty avoid giving because they are uncertain whether their money will be used for the intended purposes or whether they can be prosecuted if their money ends up in terrorists' hands.

Muslim Advocates, a San Francisco-based advocacy group, earlier in August launched an initiative that calls for U.S.-based Muslim chari-

ties to undergo a tough vetting process conducted by a charity watchdog arm of the Better Business Bureau, a nongovernmental group that works to ensure the integrity of private businesses. The process will not make charities terrorist-proof, but the bureau's scrutiny and evaluation of charities' legal compliance, financial accountability and good governance may give donors enough confidence to send checks again, Muslim Advocates said.

The initiative "provides an avenue for American-Muslim charities and nonprofit institutions to familiarize themselves with and adhere to the highest standards of governance and accountability while reassuring donors that resources are being di-

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rected toward their intended and stated purposes," said Farhana Khera, executive director of the group, in an August 13 news release.

So far, seven organizations have volunteered for the review process. Muslim Advocates plans a nationwide campaign to encourage other Muslim charitable groups to participate.

The initiative will not address, however, another major issue with which the government and Muslim fundraisers struggle: how to carry out charitable work overseas in areas affected by terrorist activities without giving terrorists inadvertent support.

Patrick O'Brien, assistant secretary of the Treasury for terrorist financing, said social welfare and charitable efforts run by al-Qaida, Hamas, Hezbollah and similar groups are intertwined with terrorist activities in some places. This helps them gain support, recruit members and radicalize vulnerable populations.

O'Brien said Treasury's terrorist financing guidelines call on U.S. charities to take precautionary measures in such high-risk areas, particularly by vetting their local employees, partners and grantees. (See "Treasury Issues Anti-Terrorist Guidelines for Charities (<http://www.america.gov/st/washfile-english/2006/September/20060929172737berehellek0.8130609.html>).")

But Rob Buchanan, managing director for international programs at the Council on Foundations, a Virginia-based association of grant-making groups, says the vetting process is unlikely to be effective as terrorist groups change their names, structures and features with ease.

The council recommends that U.S. charities make every effort to know a grantee, Buchanan told *America.gov*. He said charities, however, usually do not have the expertise or resources to conduct extensive security reviews of people and groups they deal with in target countries.

Buchanan said the guidelines have been significantly improved since they were first introduced in 2002. But his organization, which along with some Muslim charities has played a role in providing feedback on the guidelines, still has concerns about their vague language and several poorly defined key notions.

Michael Rosen, a policy adviser with the Treasury Department, defends the guidelines. He said they have been consistently refined in consultations with the charitable sector, a process Treasury vows to continue.

Another official, Chip Poncy of the Treasury's Office of Terrorist Financing and Financial Crimes, said the U.S. government wants to establish a safe means of providing humanitarian aid but struggles with often-competing priorities of fighting terrorism and supporting American generosity toward foreign communities.

Officials suggested that, until an appropriate solution is found, U.S.-based charities can tap into government resources and distribution networks to leverage government counterterrorism expertise and assets. For that purpose, some U.S.-based groups, such as American Charities for Palestine, already have partnered with the U.S. Agency for International Development, which has formal anti-terrorism procedures in place. (See "U.S. Government, Private Groups Funnel Donations to Palestinians (<http://www.america.gov/st/foraid-english/2008/August/20080804175040cpataruk0.5054285.html>).")

The full text of O'Brien's remarks (<http://www.treas.gov/press/releases/hp1117.htm>) can be found on the Treasury Department Web site. Press releases by Muslim Advocates (http://www.muslimadvocates.org/press_room/muslim_advocates_announces_new.html) and American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (<http://www.adc.org/index.php?id=3342>) are available on the organizations' respective Web sites.

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

Family Business Imports Tea from Asia and Africa

By Burton Bollag
Special Correspondent

Washington -- The decision by a brother and sister to import from Oman the dried-lime tea their Iraqi immigrant family drank has blossomed into a large specialty tea business.

Numi Organic Tea has prospered by introducing consumers to natural flavors from around the world. Numi means "citrus" in the founders' Arabic mother tongue and refers to the dried-lime tea that was the company's first product. Strictly speaking, dried lime, rooibos, honeybush and a number of other Numi varieties are not teas at all, but herbal infusions, known also as tisanes.

The brand has won market share by stressing commitment to two issues of growing importance to consumers: organic, environmentally sustainable agriculture and better conditions for the workers who harvest and process the tea.

The company, Numi LLC, based in Oakland, California, did \$12.5 million of business last year, according to Ahmed Rahim, 40, its chief executive. After sales growth of around 50 percent per year in recent years, he expects sales to reach nearly \$17 million in 2008.

He and his sister, Reem Rahim, 42, started the business from Reem's small Oakland apartment in 1999. The siblings brought their multicultural histories to the enterprise.

The Rahim family left Baghdad and came to America when Ahmed and Reem were small children. They



*Ahmed and Reem Rahim
started Numi Organic Tea*

then in Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic. There, amid the large community of young Americans who arrived after the 1989 fall of communism, he helped design several tea houses, becoming part owner of three of them. In the process, Ahmed learned the subtleties

grew up in Cleveland, where their father practiced medicine.

After college, Ahmed spent 10 years in Europe, first as a photographer and sometime-musician based in Paris,

Numi's packaging.

Part of Numi Organic Tea's appeal is its "purist" approach. It uses only whole tea leaves, herbs and dried fruits in its teas, shunning even natural flavorings and oils.

Numi has popularized new varieties, like "flowering tea" -- hand-sewn balls of tea leaves that open like flowers when steeped in boiling water. The company also introduced what it describes as a new, chemical-free decaffeination method, using carbon dioxide. These innovations and new flavors are "how we got so popular so fast," Ahmed said.

The enterprise also came along at a good time. Total sales of tea and tisanes in the United States have increased almost fourfold in the



Numi organic flowering tea

of the world's most popular drink after water.

Reem worked as a biomedical engineer before spending time in Italy in pursuit of an artistic career. She relies on both experiences to design

past two decades, from \$1.84 billion in 1990 to \$6.85 billion in 2007, according to the Tea Association of the U.S.A. Sales of specialty teas, like those sold by Numi, grew by a similar proportion, from

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\$0.27 billion to \$1.1 billion.

Numi obtains its products from gardens and farms around the world. Green, white, puerh (fermented tea), and flowering teas come from China, its biggest supplier. Black teas come from India and Sri Lanka. Herbal ingredients come from Africa: mint from Morocco, chamomile from Egypt, and the popular rooibos ("red bush" in Afrikaans) and honeybush from South Africa.

Ahmed said 97 percent of Numi's products are certified organically grown, without chemical fertilizers or pesticides.

In addition, the majority of its products bear the Fair Trade Certified label, issued by the nonprofit TransFair USA, which monitors farms and factories producing tea, coffee, cocoa and a few other commodities to make sure they are free of child labor and other abuses and to ensure decent working conditions. A percentage of each Fair

Trade Certified purchase is returned to workers' cooperatives to fund community development projects, in areas like health care or education.

Like other fair trade importers, Numi says it seeks to build long-term relationships with suppliers and does its own monitoring to ensure that farms and workshops treat workers well and practice sustainable, or organic agriculture. Ahmed said workers who harvest and process Numi's teas earn two to three times the amount earned by other workers.

In 2007, Numi became the first company in a pilot project for an alternate system to ensure workers' rights, the Fair Labor Practices and Community Benefits certification. The new system is being developed by the Scientific Certification Systems company, which in 2005 introduced the widely used VeriFlora standards that certify cut flowers are produced in an "environmentally and socially responsible" way.

Some commentators criticize fair

trade for inducing more farmers to grow coffee, tea or other crops to sell at higher prices to fair-trade buyers, thereby leading to overproduction and falling prices. But John C. Edmunds, a professor of finance at Babson College in Massachusetts, said what the critics miss is that fair trade creates a new market. A small but growing number of people in the wealthy countries, he said, is willing to pay a premium price for commodities produced in a more socially and environmentally responsible way. "Fair trade is helping a lot of [small farmers and workers] and bringing a better quality product to educated consumers," he said.

Numi hopes that a commitment to social and ecological responsibility, combined with a close attention to its teas, will lead to continued growth of its business.

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

Jury Service a Valuable Civic Duty, Says Former Court Official

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington -- Being called to serve on a jury is an almost inevitable experience of U.S. citizenship. When a jury summons arrives in the mail, many recipients nervously imagine spending days away from jobs and family at the local courthouse hearing evidence before ultimately and uncomfortably deciding the fate of someone in their community.

In reality, instances of juries isolated for weeks or months, an image popularized by the entertainment media, are "very rare," David Bell, former clerk of court for Arlington County, Virginia, told America.gov.

Bell recently retired after serving 37 years with the court -- the longest serving elected official in the county's history. His duties included facilitating jury selection and instructing jurors on their duties.

The Sixth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which came into effect in 1791, guarantees a right to a speedy and public trial by a "jury of peers," meaning a representative cross-section of the community.

The Founders "weren't just speaking to the people that were about to be tried or that were going to be subject to the trial," Bell said. "They were also speaking to the rest of the community, which were the peers they were talking about, saying that this is one of the few [civic tasks] ... a government must require its citizens to do. And that if you didn't do it, your neighbor had to."



David Bell served as the elected Arlington County, Virginia, clerk of court for 37 years (Arlington County, Virginia)

From his experience, most first-time jurors "came in with great trepidation and went out admitting that they were glad that they did it and in fact would do it again," he said.

Each U.S. state and local community has its own procedures for selecting and conducting a jury trial. In Arlington County, approximately 2,000 randomly selected residents each year receive a jury summons. More potential jurors are called than are needed for the scheduled trials to allow attorneys for both sides to screen for biases or special interests that could affect jurors' opinions.

Attorneys for the defense and the prosecution receive a list of the potential jurors' names, occupations, ages and addresses, and can ask jurors questions. "There are no right or wrong answers. They [the attor-

neys] are merely trying to get the best jury they can for their particular side of the case, be it criminal or civil," Bell said.

Unlike some states, he says, Virginia prohibits lawyers from asking jurors about their political views or social attitudes unless they directly pertain to the facts of the case.

VOICE OF THE COMMUNITY

Juries are very important to the legal process because they bring in individuals with a fresh, unbiased perspective, he said. Unlike legal professionals, jurors have not heard the same types of cases over and over. The system provides an opportunity for the community to speak, rather than only seasoned professionals.

For example, in a series of eight similar cases over two years, Virginia jurors sent a message to the legal community about auto accidents that caused little injury or property damage. In each case, the juries knew the accident was the fault of the defendant, his or her insurance had offered compensation and the prosecution felt more compensation was needed.

In all eight cases, the jury found the defendant responsible for the accident but did not award any reparations to the plaintiff.

"That was a message to the plaintiff's [attorneys]," Bell said. "If you're going to come in here with an automobile accident case ... a soft tissue injury and not much damage to the car, don't be expecting multi thousands of dollars out of

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the jury." Those types of cases have nearly disappeared from Virginia courts, with lawyers opting to settle them without going to trial.

Bell said Virginia did a study in 1998 that compared results of jury trials to trials decided by judges. The study found that, despite Virginia being one of the most diverse states in the country, verdicts on a given charge were "actually more consistent if given out by a jury than by a judge," he said.

Sometimes the jury system is criticized for handing out excessive penalties, Bell said, such as harsh sentencing of

convicted burglars during a period when daytime burglaries were common and the community felt terrorized. Virginia is one of four U.S. states in which juries determine guilt or innocence and the appropriate sentence or damages. In most states, the judge determines the penalty based on guidelines.

"I think you could argue that there

is some sense to that because it's a lot easier job for the jury to determine 'did the accused do it or not' without worrying about what the punishment's going to be," he said.

U.S. LITIGATION, BUT NOT TRIALS, ON THE RISE

Even though civil litigation has increased across the United States,

As for criminal cases, in the past when only judges had access to a defendant's criminal record, many accused criminals opted for a jury trial in hopes that, without that knowledge, the jury would be more likely to acquit or assign a lighter sentence. However, most courts now provide juries with a defendant's criminal record, thereby eliminating that advantage.



Clip Art - Jury examining documentary evidence in jury box

Bell said he is not concerned that the number of jury trials is going down. "The guaranteed constitutional right is still there, and I think that's the important thing," he said.

Jury trials send an important message about

the number of jury trial is declining.

"I think the reason that civil trials have been declining is, contrary to the urban legend, juries really don't give out money willy-nilly, at least that's my experience, and the plaintiff's lawyers know that and they're tending to settle these cases more often than not," he said.

the American legal system, he said. "It's subject to everyone, and everyone is subject to it. ... And it works. People have confidence in it."

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

Religious Rites of Passage Are Steps Toward Adulthood

By Sonya Weakley
Special Correspondent

Washington -- She stood poised atop Masada, the immense rock plateau overlooking the Dead Sea that figures so poignantly in Jewish history. Not far away, a group of young Israelis were taking their next step to adulthood, pledging the next two or three years of their lives as soldiers in the Israel Defense Forces.

Against this backdrop of past and present, Paige Siegel, a teenager from Kensington, Maryland, was becoming a bat mitzvah. She was standing where 1,000 Jews killed themselves rather than be taken by advancing soldiers of ancient Rome roughly 19 centuries ago. "It was very emotional" to be in the same place, said her mother, Joy.

This Jewish rite of passage -- including the bar mitzvah for boys -- marks the shift from childhood to a place of responsibility in the Jewish religion. While life has changed dramatically for young people over time, the meaning and importance of the tradition has not, Joy said.

"It sends the child a message that she has reached a certain level and milestone in her development," she said. "There are many more things she has to be responsible for at her age."

Almost as important, though, is what the ritual means to the family. On one level, it signifies to elder family members that the child understands her religion and the significance of it. "Paige is fortunate enough to have all four grandparents" taking a great deal of pride in

her achievements, Joy said.

The significance of the event also is enough to bring family and friends -- some from miles away -- who otherwise may never come together, she said. While a small group of 13 traveled to Paige's December 27 bat mitzvah ceremony in Israel in



Children wait to receive first communion at St. St. Matthews Catholic Church in New York City.

2007, many more had come to celebrate with her in Maryland a month earlier.

UNIVERSAL AND UNITING

Rites of passage, including birth and death, enable people to come together to share joy as well as grief, regardless of religious faith, said Andrew Tevington, assistant pastor at the United Methodist Church of the Servant in Oklahoma City and

author of *Our Faiths: A Peace Offering*.

Funerals in particular are multifaith events, he said. Though the service or burial customs may be rooted in the religious practices of the deceased, "all of us recognize pain and grief and we know others need help getting through it, so these services involve many people of different faiths."

Life landmarks are important to everyone who shares an interest in or love for the person involved, he said. A Protestant baptism, Catholic confirmation, Jewish bar mitzvah or Hindu funeral will bring people together regardless of religion.

"These are important milestones in our lives, and they tell us something has changed. They are indicators that life is progressing as it should," he said. "Whole communities come together for these events."

A SHARED UNDERSTANDING

While many people of varied religions can celebrate an event, sharing a bond of the same religion can help children, and their parents, feel more secure in preparing for a major ritual, such as when Catholic children make their first communion or go through confirmation.

First communion "was a real big deal" for all three of Theresa Trimble's children, she said. She enjoyed "watching them grow within their faith with their friends. They learn as a group, and it's less intimidating, especially when the priest comes to talk with them." She also believes they enjoyed sharing the

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Major Medical Nonprofit Grew from Response to Minnesota Disaster

By Kathryn McConnell
Staff Writer

Rochester, Minnesota -- In 1883, leaders of different religions joined to help victims of a destructive tornado that hit southeastern Minnesota. Their partnership eventually became the first and largest not-for-profit integrated medical practice in the world.

When the storm struck, local physician William Worrall Mayo stepped in to care for the injured. For nursing care, the doctor turned to the local community of Catholic nuns headed by Mother Alfred. Later, Mother Alfred suggested buying land and constructing a hospital where Mayo and his physician sons, William and Charles, would be staff doctors. Alfred's suggestion became St. Marys Hospital, which opened in 1889 with the nuns serving as nursing staff.

"In an era of religious hostility, the cooperation between the Catholic Franciscan sisters and the Protestant Mayo brothers set a model for service to people in need," according to a Mayo Clinic statement on the institution's heritage.

A physician "knows neither color nor race when humanity is suffering," the elder Mayo is believed to have said. Mayo had witnessed in his native England the social upheaval caused by the Industrial Revolution and developed a humane philosophy for giving back to others.

BECOMING A NONPROFIT GROUP

Raised with this philosophy, the Mayo brothers in 1894 decided to devote half of their incomes from their medical practice to a fund for medical research.



Dr. William Worrell Mayo and Sister Alfred formed an early and lasting medical partnership based in Minnesota.

By 1919, the Mayos had transformed their private practice, which now included a growing number of physician partners, into a not-for-profit institution.

Early on, the Mayo Clinic combined physician offices with research facilities and educational programs. In rotation, the brothers traveled widely within the United States and to other countries to gain new medical knowledge.

After son William Mayo traveled to South America in the 1920s to extend the friendship of U.S. physicians to colleagues in the southern Western Hemisphere, the Mayo Clinic experienced an influx of physicians and patients from the region.

Mayo continues to promote international professional exchanges focused on patient care, research and education.

ADVANCING MEDICAL CARE TECHNIQUES

St. Marys Hospital helped usher in the era of "safe surgery," with the Mayos' early use of antiseptic techniques greatly improving patient survival rates.

In the 1950s, a second Rochester hospital, Methodist Hospital, pioneered other medical concepts that are now standard -- including round nursing stations, which shorten the distance between nurses and patient rooms, and open-heart and joint-replacement surgical procedures.

In the 1980s, the Mayo Clinic opened branches in Florida and Arizona and in 1986 the clinic and the two Rochester hospitals joined to become a single organization devoted to finding new medical cures and treatments.

Beginning in 2005, Mayo physicians have traveled to see cardiac patients in the United Arab Emirates

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Religious Rites of Passage Are Steps Toward Adulthood . . .

(Continued from page 11)

entire event, including dressing up and going through the process together.

Her oldest son is beginning his preparation for confirmation, which involves studying the life of a saint and also can include service to the broader community. He can discuss ideas and share stress with a group of friends who have to meet the same requirements.

Regardless of the event or the religion, childhood rites of passage en-



Bat Mitzvah Girl, by Laura Bolter

able families to consciously observe and enjoy growth and change in their children. Joy Siegel found that to be especially rewarding. "You see your kids go through these situations like they're second nature to them," she said.

See Diversity -- At Worship (<http://amlife.america.gov/amlife/diversity/atworship.html>).

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

Major Medical Nonprofit Grew from Response to Minnesota Disaster . . .

(Continued from page 12)

at the Dubai Healthcare City.

MAYO TODAY

Mayo now has more than 3,400 physicians and scientists -- more than half of them in the growing city of Rochester, population 100,000. They are supplemented by 48,200 allied health professionals. The staff includes immigrants from approximately 70 countries.

In 2007, Mayo provided care for approximately 520,000 patients, including 8,000 from other countries, according to clinic statistics.

Mayo Medical Laboratories in Rochester provides sophisticated testing in 58 medical specialties and subspecialties for samples submitted from more than 125 countries, Mayo spokesman Robert Nellis told America.gov.

In addition to providing care, Mayo's medical staff members do

significant medical research.

For instance, researcher Yuan-Ping Pang discovered amino acid residues in malaria-carrying mosquitoes -- a discovery that could lead to pesticides toxic only to mosquitoes, leaving mammals unharmed.

With funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Pang also established a computer-aided model to create visualizations of molecules that cause diseases. Learning more about how biological systems function could lead to new treatments, according to a Mayo Clinic newsletter.

The Mayo Clinic works with numerous charities to bring patients to its facilities. One patient, Bertha Hernandez of Cacate, Mexico, suffered from a torn bladder and a chronic pelvic infection that were results of complications during labor. Mayo physician Rosanne Kho, who had volunteered in Mexico with the nonprofit group International Medical Assistance, learned about Hernandez and sent word to have the

woman come to the Mayo Clinic, where a colleague performed needed surgery.

The Mayo Clinic also cooperates with local charities to help its neighbors during emergencies. In 2007, the clinic worked with the American Red Cross and Salvation Army to help people in southeastern Minnesota who had experienced losses from a flash flood. Mayo doctors volunteer with the Salvation Army to care for underprivileged people.

The clinic has formed a partnership with the University of Minnesota. This collaboration is expected to yield new discoveries in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases and improved technologies for agricultural research.

The Mayo Clinic also works with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to reduce the incidence of diseases in American Indian communities. ♦

“Lion of the Senate” Calls Democratic Party to Action

Washington -- In the American political process, the rhetoric of national conventions is focused on the future -- new ideas, new directions, new candidates. Yet invariably the success of those messages hinges on the ability of convention speakers to tap into the shared experiences and shared aspirations of the audience in the convention hall and in front of television screens across America.

On Monday, on the opening night of the Democratic National Convention, Senator Edward (Ted) Kennedy of Massachusetts gave the sort of speech that has been the lifeblood of U.S. political conventions since the days before piped-in music, light shows and slick video presentations.

A man known as the lion of the Senate for his powerful defense of liberal causes and his successful legislative record drew on the shared history and common passions of the Democratic faithful to send a message of unity and a call to political action.

“For me this is a season of hope -- new hope for a justice and fair prosperity for the many, and not just for the few -- new hope,” the senator, still undergoing treatment for brain cancer, told the crowd. “There is a new wave of change all around us, and if we set our compass true, we will reach our destination -- not merely victory for our party, but renewal for our nation.”

In the United States, the Kennedy family name -- carried by the long-serving senator as well as his brothers President John Kennedy and Senator Robert Kennedy, both assassinated in the 1960s -- has a special hold on Americans, particu-



Massachusetts Senator Edward Kennedy addresses the Democratic National Convention at the Pepsi Center in Denver on August 25. The Democrats formally opened their convention to crown Barack Obama as the first black presidential nominee in US history. (AFP/Paul J. Richards)

larly Democrats, that to some extent transcends politics.

Ted Kennedy's endorsement of Barack Obama early in 2008 is regarded by many as a key factor in Obama's successful pursuit of the Democratic nomination.

Following is a transcript of the senator's speech:

(begin transcript)

Senator Edward M. Kennedy
Democratic National Convention
Denver, Colorado
August 25, 2008

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you, Caroline.

My fellow Democrats, my fellow Americans, it is so wonderful to be here.

And nothing -- nothing is going to keep me away from this special gathering tonight.

I have come here tonight to stand with you to change America, to restore its future, to rise to our best ideals, and to elect Barack Obama president of the United States.

As I look ahead, I am strengthened by family and friendship. So many of you have been with me in the happiest days and the hardest days. Together we have known success and seen setbacks, victory and defeat.

But we have never lost our belief that we are all called to a better country and a newer world. And I pledge to you -- I pledge to you that I will be there next January on the floor of the United States Senate when we begin the great test.

(Continued on page 16)

Democrats Stress Barack Obama's Willingness to Work with Allies

By Michelle Austein
Staff Writer

Denver -- Party leaders and campaign surrogates for presumed Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama stress the candidate's multilateral approach to foreign policy, saying that the Illinois senator would improve America's image in the world.

"Our standing in the world and influence in the world has diminished," Joe Lockhart, a press secretary during President Bill Clinton's administration, said during a State Department Foreign Press Center briefing August 26. "I think you're going to see a different approach from the Democratic ticket and President Obama, which is, 'We are leaders in the world but we do want to work with people.'"

"We do believe that other countries are important, and that it is just as important to listen as to dictate. I think you'll see a significant change and an openness around the world to a different kind of American leadership."

Lockhart was not speaking on behalf of the Obama campaign, but those who were representing the Illinois senator offered similar statements.

According to Wendy Sherman, a foreign policy adviser to Obama, the Democratic candidate's top goals are to withdraw American troops from Iraq, increase resources to fight the Taliban and al-Qaida in Afghanistan, increase the security of nuclear weapons and improve energy security.

Stronger international alliances are essential to these and all of



Obama's international security plans. "We cannot get the job done alone," Sherman said at a separate Foreign Press Center briefing on August 25.

Obama "is going to engage with the world. ... with smart diplomacy, strong alliances and really bring America's moral authority back into the world," she said.

OVERVIEW OF OBAMA'S APPROACH TO FOREIGN POLICY

Sherman said Obama long has advocated withdrawing troops from Iraq and increasing troop levels in Afghanistan. However, Sherman said, a diplomatic effort is needed to ensure Iraq's neighbors help the country maintain security and enhance economic development. "A strong Iraq and an economically strong government is probably the best antidote to Iranian involvement in Iraq," she said.

Obama believes it is crucial to bring more U.S. troops to Afghanistan and to increase NATO engagement in the region, according to Sherman. He also wants to increase assistance to Pakistan by improving its health care system, infrastruc-

ture and security. "There is a wide array of steps that have to be taken here ... to make sure that the Taliban ... does not grab hold and al-Qaida is diminished," Sherman said.

An Obama administration also would pay close attention to Iran. Sherman said Obama wants Iran to stop its support of terrorism and to embrace Israel, but says the United States needs to work with its allies and have a frank conversation about Iran.

In Asia, Sherman said, China not only is a growing power in the region, but in the world. Although the United States and China cooperate on many issues, "Senator Obama will not hesitate, as good friends do with each other, to speak directly about concerns Americans have about the direction China might



take that we think might not be in the interests of freedom and the rights of human beings," Sherman said.

As for the ongoing conflict between Russia and Georgia, Obama has

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Democrats Stress Barack Obama's Willingness to Work with Allies . . .

(Continued from page 15)

been very clear that Russia's actions were "completely wrong, inappropriate and not in the interest of Russia as a responsible 'player' in the international community," Sherman said.

Obama believes the United States has to "evaluate this relationship day by day, depending on Russia's behavior. ... There is no question there are many things we have to work closely with Russia on," such as dealing with Iran and North Korea and securing nuclear weapons, Sherman said, adding that the United States will continue to work with Russia on anything that is in the United States' national interest. "But even in that context, Senator

Obama has been very clear that we have to evaluate this relationship."

In the Americas, a high priority for an Obama administration would be tackling organized crime, which "is very crucial not only to stopping drug wars, but to stopping civil wars," Sherman said.

TRADE ISSUES

Even though Obama has spoken critically of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) during his campaign for the nomination, "Democrats are for trade; they are for fair trade," Sherman said.

"There is no doubt that in a globalized economy, not everyone has benefited from trade." Obama

wants to ensure the gap between rich and poor is addressed and a framework for all people to benefit from trade is established, she said. "Democrats believe in a fair playing field where all people can benefit and all people can experience prosperity."

In Africa, Obama supports providing assistance to the region, especially to emerging democracies. Obama talks about the importance of trading with and providing support to Africa, said Sherman.

As another indication that foreign policy will be important to an Obama administration, Sherman predicted Obama would travel extensively as president. ♦

"Lion of the Senate" Calls Democratic Party to Action . . .

(Continued from page 14)

Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you.

For me this is a season of hope -- new hope for a justice and fair prosperity for the many, and not just for the few -- new hope.

And this is the cause of my life -- new hope that we will break the old gridlock and guarantee that every American -- north, south, east, west, young, old -- will have decent, quality health care as a fundamental right and not a privilege.

We can meet these challenges with Barack Obama. Yes, we can, and finally, yes, we will.

Barack Obama will close the book

on the old politics of race and gender and group against group and straight against gay.

And Barack Obama will be a commander-in-chief who understands that young Americans in uniform must never be committed to a mistake, but always for a mission worthy of their bravery.

We are told that Barack Obama believes too much in an America of high principle and bold endeavor, but when John Kennedy called of going to the moon, he didn't say it's too far to get there. We shouldn't even try.

Our people answered his call and rose to the challenge, and today an American flag still marks the surface of the moon.

Yes, we are all Americans. This is what we do. We reach the moon. We scale the heights. I know it. I've seen it. I've lived it. And we can do it again.

There is a new wave of change all around us, and if we set our compass true, we will reach our destination -- not merely victory for our Party, but renewal for our nation.

And this November the torch will be passed again to a new generation of Americans, so with Barack Obama and for you and for me, our country will be committed to his cause. The work begins anew. The hope rises again. And the dream lives on.

(end transcript ♦

Hillary Clinton Encourages Supporters to Back Barack Obama

By Michelle Austein
Staff Writer

Denver – “It is time to take back the country we love,” former presidential candidate Hillary Clinton said in a highly anticipated speech at the Democratic National Convention, telling her supporters and those of presumed Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama, “We are on the same team, and none of us can sit on the sidelines.



In her speech at the Democratic convention, Senator Hillary Clinton encourages her supporters to vote for Obama.

“Whether you voted for me or for Barack, the time is now to unite as a single party with a single purpose. ... This is a fight for the future and it is a fight we must win.”

Clinton, a senator from New York and the first viable female presidential candidate in U.S. history, spoke August 26 on the 88th anniversary of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, which gave women the right to vote. She received nearly as many votes as Obama in the Democratic primaries and caucuses, but Obama earned the support of a majority of delegates and superdelegates, securing the nomination.

Since Clinton suspended her campaign in June, political pundits and average Americans alike have questioned whether her supporters would vote for Obama. Ahead of the convention, political experts viewed her speech as a key opportunity to unite the Democratic Party.

Convention delegates, many who are pledged to vote for Clinton, showed their support for the New York senator, sporting pins, shirts,

hats and signs with her name. Others waved signs that read “Unity.”

Jo-Ann White, a delegate representing Democrats Abroad who is pledged to vote for Clinton, wore Clinton pins. She told America.gov that throughout the convention she has been wearing Obama pins. “But tonight is Hillary’s night.”

Clinton, like many other speakers during the second day of the convention, had strong words about presumed Republican presidential nominee John McCain. Throughout the evening, delegates held signs saying “McCain more of the same,” a reference to the policies of the Bush administration.

The New York senator thanked her supporters, saying they made history, and told them that “you haven’t worked so hard over the last 18 months ... to suffer through more failed leadership. No way. No how. No McCain.”

“It makes sense that George Bush and John McCain will be together

next week in the Twin Cities [of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota,] because these days they’re awfully hard to tell apart,” Clinton said.

Focusing on the future of the country, Clinton said many problems await the next president, including dealing with job losses, rising prices and international conflicts. She said Obama will tackle these issues and meet global challenges.

“We don’t have a moment to lose or a vote to spare,” Clinton said. “Nothing less than the fate of our nation and the future of our children hang in the balance.”

FORMER VIRGINIA GOVERNOR GIVES KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Mark Warner, former governor of Virginia and current candidate for the U.S. Senate, gave the convention’s keynote address, which focused on the future of the party and the future of America.

“The most important contest of our generation has begun,” Warner said. “Not the campaign for the presidency. Not the campaign for Congress. But the race for the future.”

“It won’t be won with yesterday’s ideas and yesterday’s divisions. And it won’t be won with a president who is stuck in the past. We need a president who understands the world today, the future we seek and the change we need,” Warner said.

(Continued on page 19)

Barack Obama Selects Delaware Senator Joe Biden as Running Mate

By Michelle Austein
Staff Writer

Washington -- Presumed Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama has selected Delaware Senator Joe Biden to be his running mate, saying, "Joe won't just make a good vice president -- he will make a great one."

In a presidential-campaign first, thousands of supporters learned of Obama's selection via text message -- which was sent at 3 a.m. EDT August 23. The announcement was followed by a joint appearance at a rally attended by about 30,000 in Springfield, Illinois. Springfield is the capital of Obama's home state and the site where he launched his presidential campaign.

"Joe Biden is that rare mix -- for decades, he has brought change to Washington, but Washington hasn't changed him," Obama said.

"He's an expert on foreign policy whose heart and values are rooted firmly in the middle class. He has stared down dictators and spoken out for America's cops and firefighters. He is uniquely suited to be my partner as we work to put our country back on track."

Biden, 65, has represented his small mid-Atlantic state for 36 years. Best known for his international relations and national security experience, Biden chairs the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which has a powerful role in shaping U.S.

foreign policy. He has traveled to many countries as a U.S. senator, most recently to Georgia, where he met with the country's president.

Biden sought the presidency himself in 1988 and again in 2008, when he withdrew from the race after the Iowa caucuses. Political experts considered him a likely vice presidential contender, noting that Bi-

swing state of Pennsylvania -- Biden's birthplace. Biden is also Catholic and Catholics can often be swing voters.

In his first speech as the presumed Democratic vice presidential nominee, Biden said he was honored to be a part of what he called "this journey." Biden's speech focused on criticism of his long-time Senate

colleague, presumed Republican presidential nominee John McCain, but also reiterated the Obama campaign's key theme of change.

"I have never in my life seen Washington so broken. ... These times call for a total change in Washington's worldview. These times require more than a good soldier. They require a wise leader -- a leader ... who can deliver. A leader who can deliver the

change we need," Biden said.

Biden praised his running mate, saying he learned a great deal about the Illinois senator during their time campaigning against each other in the primaries.

"No one knows better than I do that presidential campaigns are crucibles in which you're tested and challenged every single day. And over the past 18 months, I've watched Barack meet those challenges with judgment, intelligence and steel in his spine."

McCain called Biden to congratulate

(Continued on page 19)



Joe Biden speaks with Barack Obama at a rally in Springfield, Illinois, August 23.

den's foreign policy resume may alleviate concern among some voters that Obama does not have enough experience to handle difficult international issues.

PERSONAL AND STRATEGIC DECISION

A presidential candidate often considers selecting a running mate from a swing state, in hopes that those states' voters will want to see their leader elected vice president. Even though Delaware's three electoral votes are considered safely Democratic, Obama's campaign might be hoping Biden can influence voters in the neighboring

Barack Obama Selects Delaware Senator Joe Biden as Running Mate . . .

(Continued from page 18)

him, but McCain's campaign quickly unveiled a negative television ad highlighting a quote from a 2007 Democratic debate in which Biden criticized Obama as inexperienced. The ad also features a 2005 quote of Biden praising McCain. Another ad from the McCain campaign questions why Hillary Clinton, who accumulated the second-highest number of pledged delegates, was not selected as the Democratic vice

presidential nominee.

McCain is expected to announce his running mate a few days before the Republican National Convention, which begins September 1.

U.S. vice presidential candidates are selected by the presidential nominees. The decision, though typically made with advice from others, ultimately is a political and personal one, Leonard Steinhorn, professor of communication at American Uni-

versity in Washington, told America.gov.

"This gives us a bit of a window into [the presidential candidates'] thinking and the types of judgments they have about people," Steinhorn said.

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

Hillary Clinton Encourages Supporters to Back Barack Obama . . .

(Continued from page 17)

Saying that "at this critical moment in our history, we have one shot to get it right," Warner discussed the importance of reducing dependence on foreign oil, stopping global warming, improving health care and education and rebuilding alliances.

"Which candidate understands these opportunities, and which candidate knows we don't have another four years to waste? Barack Obama."

The keynote speaker slot is traditionally given to a rising leader in the party. In 2004, Obama, a candidate for the U.S. Senate, gave a keynote speech at the Democratic National Convention. Another reason for Warner's selection might be that Virginia, for the first time in decades, is considered a swing state in the presidential election.



Many of the speakers during the second night of the Democratic National Convention linked John McCain with President Bush.

and legitimize the work her supporters did in creating a historic moment in American politics.

He said that while "her supporters have been waiting for this [speech]," the party will be united after the convention.

"I predict that by the end of this convention, you'll see a very specific and positive agenda for change laid out by many surrogates for Barack Obama and Barack Obama himself. You'll also see how clear the choice is," Lockhart said.

NEXT STEPS FOR HILLARY CLINTON

Joe Lockhart, press secretary in President Bill Clinton's administration, said at a State Department Foreign Press Center briefing August 26 that Hillary Clinton's speech was an opportunity to honor

Lockhart said that following the convention, he expects Clinton's top priority to be helping elect the Democratic ticket and then "going back to the Senate and helping President Obama and Vice President Biden enact the kind of legislation that will actually improve the lives of working class Americans." ♦

U.S. Election Helping America's Image Worldwide

By Eric Green
Staff Writer

Washington -- The U.S. presidential race, with "the spectacle of democracy at work," is a great thing for America's image worldwide, and historically has given a boost to U.S. public diplomacy, Nicholas Cull, a professor of public diplomacy, tells America.gov.



Professor Nicholas Cull says the U.S. presidential race helps improve America's image abroad.

Cull, director of the public diplomacy program at the University of Southern California, says both presumed presidential nominees, Democrat Barack Obama and Republican John McCain, have mentioned the possibility of a "radical reform of U.S. public diplomacy, and there are multiple studies in progress to suggest what this might look like."

The U.S. State Department defines public diplomacy as "government-sponsored programs intended to inform or influence public opinion in other countries." Public diplomacy differs from traditional diplomacy in that it deals with individuals and organizations as well as governments.

McCain outlined the challenge for public diplomacy in a June 2007 article in the Orlando Sentinel. He said Americans of all political stripes "agree that the war on terror is not just a military struggle, but a battle of ideas." McCain said U.S. efforts to "communicate our message are ineffectual, especially compared to the anti-American information operations of much of the Arab media, al-Qaeda and radical Islamists."

The Arizona senator said America has "an opportunity to share our culture, our history and our ideals ... and we can start taking advantage of that opportunity by establishing an independent agency to communicate America's message to the world."

Obama says on his Web site that he would create an "America's Voice Initiative to send Americans who are fluent speakers of local languages to expand" U.S. public diplomacy. Obama also would "extend opportunities for older individuals such as teachers, engineers and doctors to serve overseas."

Cull, author of *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, called the impact of Obama's candidacy "simply tremendous," as reflected in a June 12 survey by the nonpartisan Pew Research Center that reported many people worldwide are paying close attention to the U.S. presidential race.

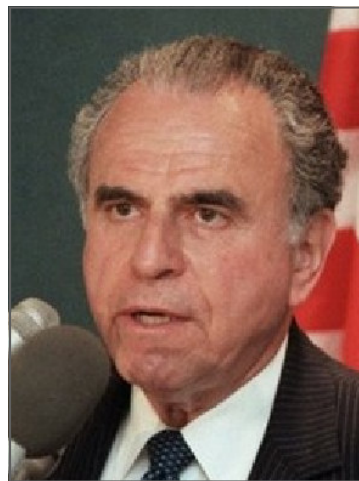
If Obama is elected president, Cull said, "I expect that [global] opinion polls will ... show a tremendous willingness to allow the United States to start fresh." McCain, he said, "would probably not generate the same response. He would seem more like business as usual."

U.S. CITIZENS CONCERNED ABOUT HOW WORLD SEES THEIR NATION

Pew found a majority of Americans surveyed said the United States is "less respected in the world than it has been in the past, and a growing proportion views this as a major problem for the country."

Cull said a return to re-creating the U.S. Information Agency (USIA), an independent agency that coordinated public diplomacy efforts in the second half of the 20th century, would not necessarily be the best idea for improving American public diplomacy. USIA was merged into the State Department in 1999.

The United States "should look at what works in other democracies," such as in the United Kingdom and Germany. Such countries, he said,



Charles Wick, head of the U.S. Information Agency under President Reagan, speaks in Washington in 1986.

"do very well by keeping the advocacy part of public diplomacy -- the policy promotion element -- in their foreign ministry, but making the cultural work independent in its own body" and "keeping their international broadcasters behind a firewall [separated] too."

"Looking to the future, I feel that the new media are already connecting people in new

ways," Cull said, and that the United States and its allies "should do what they can to promote this and trust that in the long run the tide of information will wash the

(Continued on page 24)

U.S. Rejects Russia's Recognition of Georgian Separatists

By David McKeeby
Staff Writer

Washington -- Russia's move to officially recognize the independence of Georgia's separatist regions South Ossetia and Abkhazia is a "regrettable" violation of international peace-building efforts that Moscow itself once helped shape, says Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, joining in widespread international condemnation of Moscow's latest action in the ongoing Georgia crisis.

"Abkhazia and South Ossetia are a part of the internationally recognized borders of Georgia and it's going to remain so," Rice said in an August 26 statement from the West Bank. Any move to gain further international recognition for the territories at the U.N. Security Council, she added, "will be dead on arrival."

President Bush condemned Russia's "irresponsible" decision later in the day. "The territorial integrity and borders of Georgia must be respected, just as those of Russia or any other country," Bush said.

Under the European Union's six-point cease-fire agreement, Russia agreed to join in international talks concerning South Ossetia and Abkhazia -- a diplomatic process aimed at unraveling the complex security and stability challenges facing the two regions. Russia's unilateral move has called this process into question, said Bush. "Russia's action only exacerbates tensions and complicates diplomatic negotiations," the president said.

"The six-point agreement offered a peaceful way forward to resolve the



Russian soldiers are seen on armored vehicles on their way to South Ossetia near Beslan. (AFP/Natalia Kolesnikova)

conflict," Bush said. "We expect Russia to live up to its international commitments, reconsider this irresponsible decision, and follow the approach set out in the six-point agreement."

In international law, the principle of territorial integrity occupies the highest priority when nations work to resolve separatist conflicts, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Matt Bryza explained in a recent briefing. From there, nations may be able to peacefully negotiate compromises -- a process Russia now has disrupted.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy has called an emergency EU meeting for September 1 to discuss the Georgia crisis. In the wake of Medvedev's announcement, that meeting likely will focus on Europe's future relations with Russia, French

Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner said.

Finnish Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb, who chairs the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and partnered with Kouchner to shuttle between Georgia and Russia negotiating the truce, joined in criticizing Medvedev's announcement. "The recognition of independence for South Ossetia and Abkhazia violates fundamental OSCE principles," he said.

NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer said Moscow's move was "in direct violation of numerous U.N. Security Council resolutions regarding Georgia's territorial integrity, resolutions that Russia itself has endorsed," and "call[s] into question Russia's commitment to peace and security in the Caucasus."

Among other leaders joining to reject Russia's decision were British Foreign Minister David Miliband, who called it "unjustifiable and unacceptable"; Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini, who called Russia's actions "outside the framework of international legality"; and Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt, who warned that Russia was "playing with fire" in the Caucasus.

"This is in violation of the principle of territorial integrity, which is one of the basic principles of international law and this is therefore absolutely unacceptable," said German Chancellor Angela Merkel during a visit to Estonia. "The crisis in Georgia has changed the situation in Europe unfortunately in a way that runs counter to our values and convictions." ♦

U.S.-Iraq Agreement on Military Forces Nearing Completion

By Merle D. Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington -- The United States and Iraq are very close to completing a final strategic agreement that will permit U.S. military forces to remain in Iraq and continue to conduct operations after a United Nations mandate ends December 31.

"We are working together as partners to make certain that we cover the concerns of both parties for the sovereignty of the Iraqi government," Rice said at an August 21 briefing in Baghdad with Iraqi Foreign Minister Ho-

shyar Zebari. She said a draft agreement will have to be reviewed by several different agencies in Iraq, including the Iraqi cabinet and the Iraqi parliament. It also will have to be reviewed and approved by the Bush administration, but not the U.S. Congress.

At issue are two agreements. One is a strategic framework agreement that allows the U.S.-led coalition to continue military operations in Iraq, replacing the U.N. mandate. It is significant because it gives the Iraqi government a direct say over foreign troops in its country. The second is a status of forces agreement that would govern U.S. military forces while they are serving in Iraq.

Zebari praised the U.S. negotiators for exhibiting "a great deal of flexibility and understanding."

He said reaching agreement on the strategic framework has taken as long as it has because of the highly sensitive nature of its terms in relation to Iraqi sovereignty, stability

and interests. President Bush has been in close consultation with leadership in the U.S. Congress. But he also said the agreement does not require congressional approval. "It's not a treaty, so it would not require Senate ratification," he said.

President Bush has been in consultations directly with Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, Johndroe said.

"The goal that both the United States and Iraq have is that Iraqi security forces are able to take more of the lead in combat missions and the United States forces can move into an overwatch

role" where they will be out of direct combat, but able to respond as needed, he said. "That has been our goal all along."

The United States has withdrawn five combat brigades inserted when the surge began last year, but Johndroe said the president will wait for a report in September from General David Petraeus, commander of coalition forces in Iraq, to determine if more troops can be withdrawn.

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦



Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice met with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq on August 21 in his office in Baghdad.

and interests.

Rice said the agreement and the future of U.S. forces in Iraq are under discussion now because of the success gained with the surge of forces in 2007 and because the Iraqis have been able to assume more responsibility for their security.

"We're talking about an agreement that is going to build a firm foundation for building on the significant success that we've had together in the last year, and it gives more and more responsibility to Iraqi forces," Rice said.

White House deputy press secretary Gordon Johndroe, at a White House briefing August 21, said the presi-

Clean Energy Conference Offers New Directions

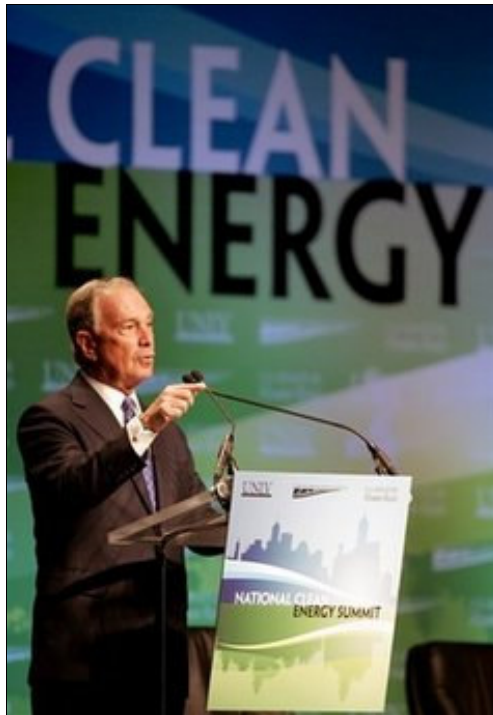
By Lea Terhune
Staff Writer

Washington -- Leaders from government and business have called for stepped-up development of U.S. renewable energy resources. The proposals were made during the first National Clean Energy Summit held at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), August 18-19. The summit was organized by Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, UNLV and the Center for American Progress Action Fund.

At the bipartisan event, former President Bill Clinton made a number of recommendations in a keynote address, including a proposal for creation of zones in the United States that rely entirely on American-generated renewable energy.

Clinton called for upgrading the U.S. power transmission grid, and for states to achieve energy independence. Several nations in Africa and the Caribbean that currently consume little energy and are rich in sun and wind also might be good candidates for total renewable energy zones, he said.

The former president's list of actions to encourage clean power also included creating more incentives for clean energy through long-term tax credits; establishing a cap-and-trade system for emissions; funding new technologies, such as carbon capture and storage, more sustainable biofuels and efficient hybrid and electric vehicles; separating utility company profits from electricity sales, a success in California; and shutting down urban landfills, using waste-to-energy technology



New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg addresses the National Clean Energy Summit in Las Vegas

instead.

"Renewable energy is not in a special locality in the United States," said Texas oil billionaire and longtime Republican T. Boone Pickens, who has been promoting renewable energy on Capitol Hill and in advertisements. "Every place in America can do well with renewables. There are farmers in the Midwest who are making more money as we speak generating electricity with their windmills than they are growing soybeans and other crops."

Pickens wants to use abundant U.S. natural gas resources to replace fossil fuels until viable sustainable sources become widely available. He estimates that a switch from oil to natural gas to run vehicles would give a window of 80 years during

which renewable technologies can be perfected. (See "Clean-Energy Fuels Create Buzz on Capitol Hill" (<http://www.america.gov/st/env-english/2008/July/20080724185950mlenuhret04416162.html>)).")

Voicing his opposition to U.S. dependence on foreign oil, Pickens said, "We are getting very close to a disaster." He followed that observation with a call for bipartisan support for a new energy policy, and asked whoever wins the election to take action within the first 100 days of the new presidential term. Congress traditionally is more amenable to passing legislation backed by a new president during the early days of an administration.

Pickens is investing billions of dollars in natural gas and a wind-power generation and transmission project in Texas.

CLEAN, RENEWABLE NEW YORK

New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg told the gathering that New York will become an urban leader in renewable energy, and he invited innovative ideas by issuing a municipal request for expressions of interest with a September 19 deadline. Bloomberg is seeking ways to introduce wind farms on city rooftops or at sea, to generate solar power on buildings or tap into geothermal resources.

"Such projects might, for example, be designed to draw power from the tides of the Hudson and East rivers -- something we're already doing on a pilot basis," he said. Increasing rooftop solar power, he said, "could meet nearly 20 percent

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Telling America's story

U.S. Election Helping America's Image Worldwide . . .

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world our way."

**PUBLIC DIPLOMACY CRUCIAL FOR
SUCCESSFUL U.S. FOREIGN
POLICY**

Arizona State University professor Steven Corman, who directs that school's Consortium for Strategic Communication, said neither McCain nor Obama "has explained how they plan to fix problems with American public diplomacy and restore our international image."

"Granted, this is not an issue that's on the mind of the average voter," Corman said. "But it is crucial to the future success" of the next president's foreign policy, he said.

Corman, co-author of A 21st Century Model for Communication in the Global War of Ideas, said the United States is perceived as having a very wide gap in what it says versus

what it does, with "policies that international audiences think are against their interests. That damages our credibility, and without credibility you can't persuade. Our Number 1 priority going forward must be restoring our lost credibility with international audiences."

In reference to an old advertising adage that "to sell the steak you've got to sell the sizzle," Corman said that "if people don't want the steak, then the sizzle isn't going to sell either. Unfortunately that's the situation with the U.S. international image at present."

The United States, he said, has to "engage the narrative in the new media. ... We should be able to do that better than any terrorist group."

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Clean Energy Conference Offers New Directions . . .

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of the city's need for electricity."

Bloomberg said, "[W]hen it comes to producing clean power, we're determined to make New York the Number 1 city in the nation."

Silicon Valley giant Google Inc. announced its intention to invest \$10 million in geothermal energy technology. Dan Reicher, director for climate change and energy initiatives at Google.org, the company's philanthropic arm, said, "These are all high capital costs projects," and the costs need to come down. The Google project aims to generate one gigawatt of energy capacity -- which could power a city -- from "enhanced geothermal systems."

General Electric Company chief Jeff Immelt, via a video link, seconded Google on the need to lower costs, saying, "The technology exists, the time is now. ... We need a call to action."

Speakers also addressed the new jobs that could be created by an invigorated renewable energy industry. Final recommendations, besides reliable tax and other incentives to stimulate investment in renewable energy by businesses and consumers, included strict energy-efficient building codes and expanded funding for research.

Senator Reid said he held the conference in his home state partly to showcase Nevada's renewable energy potential. Already it boasts

Solar One, the largest and most efficient solar thermal energy plant in the country. "The sun shines here all the time. The wind blows much of the time, and we're one of the few states that has massive amounts of geothermal energy," he said.

"We are taking the results and recommendations of this energy summit to the Democratic and Republican National conventions," Reid said, "What happens here will be taken to Capitol Hill and every city, county and state in America."

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